



Apartment Fire Safety

Seattle Fire Department Fire Prevention Division

Protection

Smoke detectors are required to protect the sleeping areas in your home. Tenants are responsible for testing the detectors monthly—push the button on the detector, it should beep loudly. If your smoke detector uses batteries, replace them at least once a year. At the same time, vacuum your detectors to remove cobwebs and dust.

If you notice that *exit lights* are not lit, are broken or vandalized, notify the manager. *Exitways* should be kept clear of trash and other obstructions.

Self-closing doors—such as those leading into stairwells—should never be blocked open. These doors keep flames and smoke from spreading.

Preparation

If you hear the building alarm, react immediately. Do not wait for instructions to begin evacuation. In a fire, seconds count.

If you discover a fire, pull the building alarm to alert others. If you can close doors to confine the fire, do so. Upon evacuating the building, call 911 from a safe location to ensure the fire

department is responding. Be prepared to tell them the nature of the emergency, and the address of the building.

If you have special needs that prevent you from exiting the building by the stairwells, ask the building manager if your name and room number can be posted at the fire alarm panel or in the manager's office, so that fire fighters are made aware of your need for assistance.

Every family should have a *fire escape plan*—and practice it. Know at least two ways out of the building. Feel doors before you open them. If they are hot, do not open them, rather use another exit. Be sure to close all doors as you pass through, including your apartment door. If you encounter smoke, drop to the floor and crawl, as smoke and heat rise.

Choose a *family meeting place* outside and well away from the building. That way you will know everyone is out. Fire escape routes must not include *elevators*, which might take you right to the fire.



Every 15 seconds, a fire department responds to a fire somewhere in the United States. The major causes of home fire deaths are smoking materials, heating, arson, and children playing with matches and lighters. By paying careful attention to these issues, each of us can share the responsibility of keeping our homes safe from fire.

Built-in Safety

Residential buildings in Seattle have many built-in safety features that increase safety if a fire does happen.

Fire Alarm System

All apartments three stories and over, or having more than 16 units, have a fire alarm system that rings to alert residents to a fire emergency.

Smoke Detectors

All residential units are equipped with smoke detectors. They are the best warning if a fire starts in your unit.

Fire Doors

Larger apartment buildings have smoke proof stairways to keep exit routes safe for residents. These stairways are guarded by fire doors leading from the floor into the stairway.

Exit Lights

These illuminated lights help guide your way out of the building.

Fire Walls

Corridors and stairways have fire-rated walls to hinder the spread of heat and flames.

Sprinklers

Many apartment buildings are equipped with sprinklers which greatly increase the building's safety.

Evacuation Plan

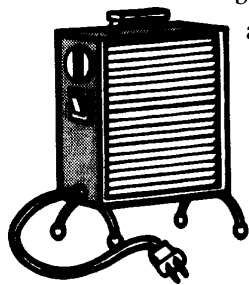
All apartments of three or more units are required to develop an evacuation plan for building residents.

Remember, even with all these safety features, prevention is still the best strategy!

Prevention

Heating

Keep portable and space heaters at least three feet from anything that can



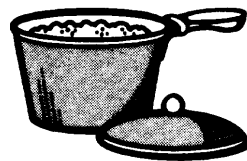
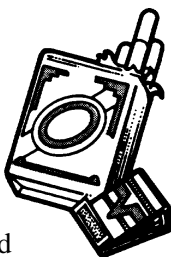
burn. Pay special attention to bed covers, drapes, and kid's toys. Never leave heaters on when you leave home or go to bed and keep children and pets well away from them. Be careful with candles and fireplaces too.

Smoking

Never smoke in bed or when you are drowsy! Provide large, deep ashtrays for smokers and put water on cigarette butts before discarding them.

Matches

Matches & lighters and kids can be a deadly combination. Store them up high where kid's can't reach them. Teach your children that matches and lighters are tools for adults, not toys for kids. If children find matches or lighters, they should tell a grown-up immediately.

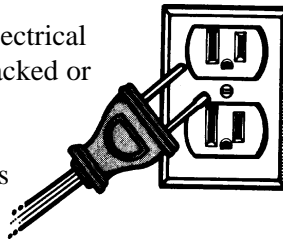


Cooking

Never leave cooking unattended. Keep pot handles turned inward so the pots can't be knocked or pulled over. If grease catches fire, carefully slide a lid over the pan to smother the flames.

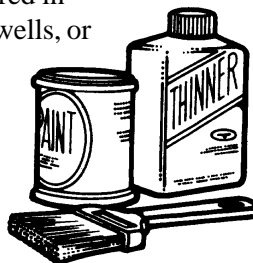
Electrical

Replace any electrical cord that is cracked or frayed. Don't overload extension cords or run them under rugs.



Storage

Keep storage areas secured to protect against arson. If you notice garbage or other items stored in hallways, stairwells, or against the building, notify the building management.



Safety Checklist

- ☐ Baseboard heaters do not touch any furniture or curtains.
- ☐ All portable heaters are placed at least three feet from bedding, furniture, and other flammable materials.
- ☐ Every fireplace is equipped with a sturdy metal screen.
- ☐ You use as few extension cords and plug adapters as possible.
- ☐ Extension cords you do use are in the open, not tacked to walls, under rugs, or through doorways.
- ☐ You keep your stove and oven clean of grease.
- ☐ You always remain in the kitchen while using the stovetop.
- ☐ You never use your oven to heat your home.
- ☐ In the event of a grease fire, you know the best response is to put a lid on the pan.
- ☐ *No smoking in bed* is a rule in your home.
- ☐ Matches and lighters are kept out of the reach of small children.
- ☐ Smoke detectors are installed on a ceiling or high on the wall outside of the bedroom(s) on each level of your home.
- ☐ You make certain that your smoke detector battery is changed once a year.
- ☐ You test and clean your smoke detector(s) on a monthly basis.

For People Who Don't Use Stairs

During a fire emergency, and any time a fire alarm is ringing, elevators should not be used by residents. To exit the building during a fire alarm, the stairs should be used. If you are unable to use the stairs, you will need to seek an area of refuge on the floor. Likely the safest place for you to seek refuge and wait for assistance is inside your apartment.

If smoke is present, observe the following survival rules.

- Use towels or clothing to block openings around doors or vents where smoke might enter. Put a wet cloth over your mouth and nose.
- If smoke or fire enters your unit, call 911 to report your location. Stay low to the floor to breathe the best air.
- It is advisable not to open or break windows. Often smoke from the outside of the building can enter through open windows. Breaking windows will put you at great risk to smoke entering from the outside, and will hamper rescue efforts below.